

# Dark Hollow

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## SYNOPSIS.

A curious crowd of neighbors invade the mysterious home of Judge Ostrander, county judge and eccentric recluse, following a veiled woman who proves to be the widow of a man tried before the judge and electrocuted for murder years before. Her daughter is engaged to the judge's son, from whom he is estranged, but the murder is between the lovers. She plans to clear her husband's memory and asks the judge's aid. Deborah Scoville reads the newspaper clipping telling the story of the murder of Algernon Aldridge by John Scoville in Dark Hollow, twelve years before. The judge and Mrs. Scoville meet at Spencer's. Folly and she shows him how, on the day of the murder, she saw the shadow of a man, wearing a stick and wearing a long peaked cap. The judge engages her and her daughter, Heather, to live with him in his mysterious home. Deborah and her lawyer, Black, go to the police station and see the stick used to murder Aldridge. She discovers a broken knife-blade point embedded in it. Deborah and Heather go to live with the judge. Deborah sees a portrait of Oliver, the judge's son, with a black band painted across the eyes. That night she finds in Oliver's room, a cup with a peak like the shadowed one, and a knife with a broken blade-point and anonymous letters and a talk with Miss Weeks increase her suspicions and fears. She finds that Oliver was in the ravine on the murder night. Black warns her and shows her other anonymous letters hinting at Oliver's guilt. In the court room the judge is handed an anonymous note. The note is picked up and read aloud. A mob follows the judge to his home. Deborah tells him why suspicion has been aroused against Oliver. The judge shows Deborah a statement written by Oliver years ago telling how he saw her husband murder Spencer at Spencer's Folly on the night the house was burned.

## CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

Chaymore tavern did change owners. When I heard that a man by the name of Scoville had bought it, I went over to see Scoville. He was the man. Then I began to ask myself what I ought to do with my knowledge, and the more I asked myself this question and the more I brooded over the matter the less did I feel like taking, not the public, but my father, into my confidence.

I had never doubted his love for me, but I had always stood in great awe of his reproof, and I did not know where I was to find courage to tell him all the details of this adventure.

There is one thing I did do, however. I made certain inquiries here and there, and soon satisfied myself as to how Scoville had been able to come into town, commit this horrid deed and escape without any one but myself being the wiser. Spencer and he had



He Found Deborah Standing Guard Over an Ill-Conditioned Fellow.

come from the West en route to New York without any intention of stopping off in Shelby. But once involved in play they had got so interested that when within a few miles of the town, Spencer proposed that they should leave the train and finish the game in his own house. Whether circumstances aided them, or Spencer took some extraordinary precautions against being recognized, will never be known. But certain it is that he escaped all observation at the station and even upon the road. When Scoville returned alone, the storm had reached such a height that the roads were deserted, and he, being an entire stranger here at that time, naturally attracted no attention, and so was able to slip away on the next train with just the drawback of buying a new ticket. I, a boy of fifteen, trespassing where I did not belong, was the only living witness of what had happened on this night of dreadful storm, in the house which was now a ruin.

I realized the unpleasantness of the position in which this put me, but not its responsibility. If I were going to do anything I should have done it at first—so I reasoned, and let the matter slide. I became interested in school and study, and the years passed and I had almost forgotten the occurrence, when suddenly the full remembrance came back upon me with a rush. A man—my father's friend—

was found murdered in sight of this spot of old-time horror, and Scoville was accused of the act.

I was older now and saw my fault in all its enormity. I was guilty of that crime—or so I felt in the first heat of my sorrow and despair. I may even have said so—in dreams or in some of my self-absorbed broodings. Though I certainly had not lifted the stick against Mr. Aldridge, I had left the hand free which did, and this was a sufficient occasion for remorse—or so I truly felt.

I was so affected by the thought that even my father, with his own weight of troubles, noticed my careworn face and asked me for an explanation. But I held him off until the verdict was reached, and then I told him. I had not liked his looks for some time; they seemed to convey some doubt of the justice of this man's sentence, and I felt that if he had such doubts, they might be eased by this certainty of Scoville's murderous tendencies and unquestionable greed.

And they were; but as Scoville was already doomed, we decided that it was unnecessary to make public his past offenses. However, with an eye upon future contingencies, my father exacted from me in writing this full account of my adventure, which with all the solemnity of an oath I here declare to be the true story of what befell me in the house called Spencer's Folly, on the night of awful storm, September 11, 1895.

OLIVER OSTRANDER.  
WITNESSES to above signature,  
ARCHIBALD OSTRANDER,  
BELA JEFFERSON,  
Shelby, November 7, 1898.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### The Telegram.

This was the document and these the words which Deborah, widow of the man thus doubly denounced, had been given to read by the father of the writer, in the darkened room which had been and still was to her, an abode of brooding thought and unfathomable mystery.

No wonder that during its reading more than one exclamation of terror and dismay escaped her. There were so many reasons for believing this record to be an absolute relation of the truth.

Incoherent phrases which had fallen from those long-closed lips took on new meaning with this unveiling of an unknown past. Repugnances for which she could not account in those old days, she now saw explained. He would never, even in passing, give a look at the ruin on the bluff, so attractive to every eye but his own. As for entering its gates—she had never dared so much as to ask him to do so.

Then the watch! Deborah knew well that watch. She had often asked him by what stroke of luck he had got so fine a timepiece. God! was her mind veering back to her old idea as to his responsibility for the crime committed in Dark Hollow? Yes; she could not help it. Denial from a monster like this—a man who with such memories and such spoils, could return home to wife and child, with some ray and confused story of a great stroke in speculation which had brought him in the price of the tavern it had long been his ambition to own—what was denial from such lips worth? The judge was right. Oliver—whose ingenuous story had restored his image to her mind, with some of its old graces—had been the victim of circumstances and not John Scoville.

Her thoughts had reached this stage and her hand, in obedience to the new mood, was lightly ruffling up the pages before her, when she felt a light touch on her shoulder and turned with a start.

The judge was at her back. How long he had stood there she did not know, nor did he say, but when upon feeling his hand upon her shoulder she turned, he was there; and while his lips failed to speak, his eyes were eloquent and their question single and imperative.

"What do you think of him now?" they seemed to ask, and rising to her feet, she met him with a smile, ghastly perhaps with the lividness of the shadows through which she had been groping, but encouraging withal and soothing beyond measure to his anxious and harassed soul.

"Oliver is innocent," she declared, turning once more to lay her hand upon the sheets containing his naive confession. "The dastard who could shoot his host for plunder is capable of a second crime holding out a similar inducement. Nothing now will ever make me connect Oliver with the crime at the bridge. As you said, he was simply near enough the hollow to toss into it the stick he had been whittling. I am his advocate from this minute."

Her eyes were still resting mechanically upon that last page lying spread out before her, and she did not observe in its full glory the first gleam of triumphant joy which, in all probability, Judge Ostrander's countenance had shown in years. Nor did he see, in the glad confusion of the moment,

the quick shudder with which she lifted her trembling hand away from those papers and looked up, squarely at last, into his transfigured visage.

"Mrs. Scoville, I love my boy. I—what's that?"

The front doorbell was ringing. In a flash Deborah was out of the room.

When the judge at last came forth, it was at Reuther's bidding. A gentleman wished to see him in the parlor.

With a dark glance, not directed against her, however, the judge bade her run away to the kitchen and as far from all these troubles as she could, then, locking his door behind him, as he always did, he strode towards the front.

He found Deborah standing guard over an ill-conditioned fellow, whose slouching figure slouched still more under his eye, but gave no other acknowledgment of his presence. Passing him without a second look, Judge Ostrander found Mr. Black awaiting him.

There was no bad blood between these two, whatever their past relations or present suspicions, and they were seen shaking hands with every appearance of mutual cordiality.

The judge was especially courteous. "I am glad," said he, "of any occasion which brings you again under my roof, though from the appearance of your companion I judge the present one to be of no very agreeable character."

"Judge, I'm your friend," thus Mr. Black began. "Thinking you must wish to know who started the riotous procedure which disgraced our town today, I have brought the ringleader here to answer for himself—that is, if you wish to question him."

Judge Ostrander wheeled about, gave the man a searching look, and failing to recognize him as any one he had ever seen before, beckoned him in.

"I suppose," said he, when the lounging and insolent figure was fairly before their eyes, "that this is not the first time you have been asked to explain your enmity to my long-absent son."

"Now, I've had my talk wherever and whenever I took the notion. Oliver Ostrander hit me once. I was just a little chap then and meanin' no harm to any one. I kept a-pesterin' of 'im and he hit me. He'd a better have hit a feller who hadn't my memory. I've never forgiven that hit, and I never will. That's why I'm hittin' him now. It's just my turn; that's all."

"Your turn! Your turn! And what do you think has given you an opportunity to turn on him?"

"I'm not in the talkin' mood just now," the fellow drawled, frankly insolent, not only in his tone but in his bearing to all present. "Nor can you make it worth my while, gents. I'll not take money. I'm an honest, hard-workin' man who can earn his own livin', and you can't pay me to keep still, or to go away from Shelby a day sooner than I want to. I was goin' away, but I gave it up when they told me that things were beginnin' to look black against Ol' Ostrander—that a woman had come into town who was a-stirrin' up things generally about that old murder for which a feller had already been 'lectrocuted, and knowin' somethin' myself about that murder and Ol' Ostrander, I—well, I stayed."

The quiet threat, the suggested possibility, the attack which wraps itself in vague uncertainty, are ever the most effective. As his raucous voice, dry with sinister purpose, which no man could shake, died out in an offensive drawl, Mr. Black edged a step nearer the judge, before he sprang and caught the young fellow by the coat-collar and gave him a very vigorous shake.

"See here!" he threatened. "Behave yourself and treat the judge like a gentleman or—"

But the judge was not ready for this. The judge had gained a new lease of life in the last half-hour and he felt no fear of this sullen billposter for all his sly innuendoes. He therefore, hindered the lawyer from his purpose, by a quick gesture of so much dignity and resolve that even the loud himself was impressed and dropped some of his sullen bravado.

"I have something to say to this fellow," he announced. "Perhaps he does not know his folly. Perhaps he thinks because I was thrown back today by those public charges against my son and a string of insults for which no father could be prepared, that I am seriously disturbed over the position into which such unthinking men as himself have pushed Mr. Oliver Ostrander. I might be if there were truth in these charges or any serious reason for connecting my upright and honorable son with the low crime of a highwayman. But there is not. I aver it and so will this lady here whom you have doubtless recognized for the one who has stirred this matter up. You can bring no evidence to show guilt on my son's part—these words he directed straight at the discomfited poster of bills—because there is no evidence to bring."

Mr. Black's eyes sparkled with admiration. He could not have used this method with the lad, but he recognized the insight of the man who could. Bribes were a sign of weakness, so were force and counter-attack; but scorn—a calm ignoring of the power of any one to seriously shake Oliver Ostrander's established position—that might rouse wrath and bring avowal; certainly it had shaken the man; he looked much less aggressive and self-confident than before.

However, though impressed, he was not yet ready to give in. Shuffling about with his feet, but not yet shrinking from an encounter few men of his stamp would have cared to subject themselves to, he answered with a re-

mark delivered with a little more civility than any of his previous ones:

"What you call evidence may not be the same as I call evidence. If you're satisfied at thinkin' my word's no good, that's your business. I know how I should feel if I was Ol' Ostrander's father and knew what I know."

"Let him go," spoke up a wavering voice. It was Deborah's.

But the judge was deaf to the warning. Deborah's voice had but reminded him of Deborah's presence. His tone had escaped him. He was too engrossed in the purpose he had in mind to notice shades of infection.

But Mr. Black had, and quick as thought he echoed her request:

"He is forgetting himself. Let him go, Judge Ostrander."

But that astute magistrate, wise in all other causes but his own, was no more ready now than before to do this.

"In a moment," he conceded. "Let me first make sure that this man understands me. I have said that there exists no evidence against my son. This I aver; and this the lady here will aver. You have probably already recognized her. If not, allow me to tell you that she is the lady whose efforts have brought back this case to the public mind. Mrs. Scoville, the wife of John Scoville and the one of all others who has the greatest interest in proving her husband's innocence. If she says, that after the most careful inquiry and a conscientious reconsideration of this case, she has found herself forced to come to the conclusion that justice has already been satisfied in this matter, you will believe her, won't you?"

"I don't know," drawled the man, a low and cunning expression lighting up his ugly countenance. "She wants to marry her daughter to your son. Any live dog is better than a dead one; I guess her opinion don't go for much."

Recalling before a cynicism that pierced with unerring skill the one joint in his armor he knew to be vulnerable, the judge took a minute in which to control his rage and then addressing the half-averted figure in the window said:

"Mrs. Scoville, will you assure this man that you have no expectations of marrying your daughter to Oliver Ostrander?"

With a slow movement more suggestive of despair than any she had been seen to make since the hour of her indecision had first struck, she shifted in her seat and finally faced them, with the assertion:

"Reuther Scoville will never marry Oliver Ostrander. Whatever my wishes or willingness in the matter, she herself is so determined. Not because she does not believe in his integrity, for she does; but because she will not unite herself to one whose prospects in life are more to her than her own happiness."

The fellow stared, then laughed. "She's a goodun," he sneered. "And you believe that bosh?"

Mr. Black could no longer contain himself.

"I believe you are the biggest rascal in town," he shouted. "Get out, or I won't answer for myself. Ladies are not to be treated in this manner."

Did he remember his own rough handling of the sex on the witness stand?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## MATTER OF OFFICE HOURS

Diverging Opinions of Two Managers as to Attaining Results Are of Interest.

Two men with offices in the Wall street district, each employing a clerical force of a dozen persons, were talking shop at luncheon the other day and one said he was an early riser and usually was at the office before any of the clerks.

"I'm an early riser, too, and get up because I like to," said the other, "but I never get to my office before nine o'clock, a half hour after the office opens for business. I do this because, after considerable experience and observation I found that it is more effective with the employees."

"They are shrewd folk, they are, and have their own methods of sizing up the boss, and I find that they conclude that the employer who gets to his office early either needs the extra time to do his work in or he wants to see that his employees are not beating time on him. Either of these conditions is, in my opinion, not to the interest of the employer."

"Therefore, I let them see that I trust them to be on hand promptly and also that I can do my part of the work in less time than they can. I can't always, but when I can't I do it at home, where they can't see me or know anything about it. I respect my people and they respect me, and I don't have to get to the office early to do it, either."

## Origin of Old Joke.

Harper Pennington has revealed the origin of the "standing room only" joke. It appears that there was hardly ever any furniture in Whistler's house. He was peculiarly parsimonious in the matter of chairs. This led to a remark of Corny Grain's which became famous. "Ah, Jimmy! Glad to see you playing to such a full house!" said Dick (Corny) Grain when shaking hands before a Sunday luncheon, while glaring around the studio with his large, protruding eyes in search of something to sit on. "What do you mean?" asked Whistler. "Standing room only," replied the actor.

So Say We All.  
Landlady—How do you like your eggs, Mr. Newcomer?  
New Boarder—Fresh, please.

## OWE DEBT TO WOMEN

### British Government Acknowledges Aid of Fair Sex.

Momentous Question at the Close of the War Will Concern the Disposition of Those Who Have Taken Places of Men.

In Great Britain there are two subjects occupying the attention of women just now. The first is how best to keep in touch and train the women who volunteered their services to the government at the beginning of the war and who have not yet been called into service. The second is whether or not the women who are holding positions formerly occupied by men shall spend their wages or hoard it. Considering this question the women point out that everybody, the whole nation, is being urged to spend, to keep the money in circulation and to help ease the financial situation for the sake of the country.

On the other hand, the majority of these women are dependent on their exertions for a living, and many of them had been out of work when taken on by the government in place of men gone to war. Now when the war ends and these men return they will lose their jobs. At club meetings, indeed at practically all gatherings of women, even over the tea-cups, this question is being seriously discussed.

Along with it and of equal importance is the question of keeping together and rendering more efficient that part of the 45,000 women volunteers for whom the government has so far found no need. The latest and so far the most practical solution to this problem is to establish a training school for these women volunteers. This school to be operated through the war office, the women to be paid for their time and work, and be trained for the fields in which they will sooner or later be needed. To get the best results it is urged that there should be a board of vocational advisers in connection with the work.

In spite of the fact that these women offered their services at the request of the government, men in various occupations have refused to serve with them. The most pronounced stand was taken by the tram drivers and conductors in Edinburgh. When the first crowd of men left the company to go to the front the company tried to put women in their places as tram conductors. The men, working on the lines refused to work with women conductors, so the com-

## CZARINA ESCAPED THE CROWD

### Unwelcome Popularity Forced Wife of Monarch to Climb Ladder When Recognized.

The czar's popularity in Russia has been enormously increased since the war on account of the work that she has been doing for the Russian Red Cross.

It is interesting to recall that her majesty once had an extraordinary experience for a royal personage while on a visit to Germany. She was out shopping one day, attended only by one lady companion, and she had hoped to remain unrecognized by the people. While she was making some purchases in a jeweler's shop, however, the news of her identity got abroad, and in a very few moments there was a large crowd outside the premises.

Exit through the front door was out of the question, so the czarina asked the jeweler to let herself and her companion out of the back of the shop.

The jeweler replied that that was impossible, as the back yard was inclosed by a very high boarding which would effectually cut off their retreat.

"That does not matter," said the empress. "Get a ladder and we will climb over it."

A ladder was brought and the czarina and her companion rushed up it, climbed over the boarding, jumped into a quiet street, and made their escape as quickly as they could.

A minute later the jeweler's shop window was smashed to atoms by the surging and excited crowd.—Rehoboth Sunday Herald.

## Life on the Farm.

A certain theatrical manager, whose eight-year-old son is visiting on a farm, received the following letter from him recently:

"Dear Father—I am having a fine time. I no a kid named Skeets Wilson and me and him are it up here. We bethe three fellers up today and I got the toothie we naked out of one's mouth. Tonite we are going to steale ole mon Blinks cow and cutt the tassell off her tale. I no a hog I can ryde in the pigs penn and a mule toked me vesday. I got a pet rat to take to bed with me and tomorrow I am going to get a snake to put down Ant Ems back. Wont that be redikulous? Willie."

Success comes to those who make up their minds to do a thing—then get busy.

A wife is very dear to the ex-bachelor who formerly saved his money.

## Good for Boys



Camping time is a time of joy for the youngsters. Very few things are needed for a cracking good time—a tent, blankets, plain, stout clothing, and plenty of good, wholesome food.

A splendid food to take along is

## Grape-Nuts

It's an ideal camping food—nourishing, appetizing and always ready to eat.

This delicious wheat and barley food contains great nutrition with little bulk. It is made from the natural, whole grains, retaining all of their vital mineral salts, particularly necessary for building health and strength in growing boys and girls.

Grape-Nuts is ready to serve direct from the package—just add good milk or cream. Summer rains won't hurt the supply—packages are wax-wrapped and moisture-proof.

## "There's a Reason"

for  
Grape-Nuts

—sold by Grocers everywhere.